



United States Congress

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
August 1, 2007

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FEDS ASSIST RANCHERS IMPACTED BY FIRES

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Idaho Congressional Delegation praised the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today for assisting ranchers impacted by the recent wildfires in Idaho.

The Farm Service Agency approved the Delegation's request for emergency grazing and haying of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) lands. The Delegation sent a letter to Secretary Johanns on July 23, 2007, requesting this action. In the letter, they stated:

“Unfortunately, the severe drought now gripping Idaho has contributed to the incredible loss of range and farm land due to catastrophic wildfires. We fear the situation facing Idaho's producers will rival some of the worst drought and wildfire conditions of past years.

“Because of the devastating situation facing Idaho's producers, we would like to request that you immediately provide the Idaho State Committee with authorization to allow CRP emergency haying and grazing during 2007. To be a valuable tool, it is of the utmost importance that USDA approve the request as soon as possible so producers can begin planning and moving cattle immediately.”

Eligible counties include: Adams; Bingham; Bonneville; Cassia; Elmore; Franklin; Idaho; Jerome; Lincoln; Nez Perce; Oneida; Owyhee; Twin Falls; Washington.

Additional assistance is being provided by the Natural Resource Conservation Service, who announced that ranchers with burned grazing lands can sign up for financial assistance through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) until August 15th. Eligible ranchers will receive a one-time \$11 per acre payment in return for resting the burned lands for one year. The payment is for purchasing livestock feed, renting additional pasture, repairing damaged fences and livestock watering facilities, and other management activities to maintain the health of the livestock.

The Delegation stated, “This is excellent news for Idaho's ranchers. It helps soften the impact to both livelihoods and the land caused by some of the worst fires in our history. As we enter what is traditionally the worst stage of our fire season, we will continue to work to provide assistance to Idahoans affected by the fires.”